

March 13, 2024

MLA Name
MLA Constituency
Address

Via Email

Dear (x),

RE: We ask for your immediate support opposing a proposal that will make chicken in BC more unaffordable.

Recent public opinion done by spark*insights has revealed some alarming new data surrounding a proposed 10% chicken price increase.

- 78% of British Columbians say they would be concerned if chicken prices rose 10%, with 21% being very upset. **Lower income households** will be most impacted the most, with 83% of respondents concerned about a 10% increase in chicken prices.
- If the 10% price increase were to occur, almost half (48%) of BC residents would buy less chicken, and a quarter (24%) would stop buying chicken altogether.

Restaurants, hotels, and institutions account for 40% of all chicken consumed by Canadians and is one of the most popular menu items that is included on 80% of restaurant menus in Canada. But today, this is at risk. BC chicken is the most expensive in Canada.

We are deeply concerned that a BC government appointed board, the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB), is currently reviewing a proposal from the BC Chicken Marketing Board to increase the price of chicken in BC by 10%. This proposal comes after chicken prices in BC have already increased by more than 34.8% since the pandemic.

The soaring cost of this widely consumed and versatile meat protein is proving detrimental to consumers and restaurants in British Columbia. A recent survey by Restaurants Canada, showed that 62% of restaurants are unprofitable (up from 51% just three months ago) compared to just 12% pre-pandemic. As a result, bankruptcies in our industry soared 112% over January 2023 – the highest in decades.

Restaurants are part of the social fabric of British Columbians and essential to our tourism product. The industry needs you to act now. Time is running out.

What we have done:

Restaurants Canada, the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, and numerous restaurants across the province wrote letters outlining the devastating impact this proposed increase would have on consumers and asking the BC Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) to reject the significant price increase proposal. Unfortunately, we were informed by BC FIRB that we had **no standing** at the board and that our letters could not even be distributed to board members for consideration. **Essentially, this means there is no voice for consumers in this process.** This is unacceptable.

In January we made representation to the premier's office and the Minister of Agriculture asking for government to protect consumers from the proposed increase. The response was the board is independent and will be allowed to complete its work. **Once the price is set, it is set. Consumers will have no recourse.**

On Monday January 22nd Restaurants Canada issued the following [BC chicken price press release](#) and conducted numerous interviews to inform the public of the impact of the proposed 10% increase.

On February 22nd we launched "*Chickan't Afford Me Anymore*" an online campaign to inform the public that a government appointed board is considering increasing the price of chicken in BC. The campaign press release can be found [here](#) and the campaign landing page can be found [here](#).

What we require from you:

Be a champion for consumers and restaurants in BC. Your voice matters and working with your colleagues in government, you can stop this proposed increase before it's too late.

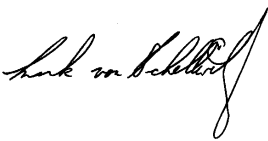
Consumers and restaurants are doing everything they can to deal with inflation - cutting costs and looking for alternatives and efficiencies. We are simply asking for those involved in the production of chicken, to do the same.

The BC FIRB will decide any day now on this proposed price increase. **We need them to reject the proposal and send the parties back to the table** to sharpen their pencils and find a better price that protects everyone involved.

Your support is crucial. Will you stand up for consumers and restaurants?

Time is running out.

Sincerely,



Mark von Schellwitz
Vice President, Western Canada